

# Investigation of Influenza Outbreaks in Healthy Populations

**Note:** these guidelines are designed to assist with outbreaks in congregate settings with a healthy population, e.g., schools, daycares, camps, workplaces.

## Prior to an investigation:

Staff who will have direct contact with ill persons should have received influenza vaccine and use standard and droplet precautions (surgical mask) when in the same room as a patient with suspect or confirmed influenza.

## Define the outbreak:

Case Definition for Influenza-like illness (ILI): Fever ( $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$  [ $37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$ ], oral or equivalent) AND cough and/or sore throat (in the absence of a known cause other than influenza).

### Outbreak Definitions:

- Increased absenteeism in association with influenza-like illness and/or laboratory confirmed influenza (e.g., schools, workplaces).
- Three or more cases of influenza-like illness in a congregate setting within a 3-day period (e.g., daycare, sports team, etc.) ;
- Two or more laboratory-confirmed cases of influenza within a 3-day period in a congregate setting (e.g., classroom, daycare).

## When you have an outbreak:

1. Confirm the diagnosis.
  - Schools or workplaces with high absenteeism: Call a sample of 15-20 absentees to estimate the proportion of absentees with ILI. Document using a line listing or questionnaire.
  - In smaller congregate settings, a line list is a valuable tool to establish the existence of an outbreak and confirm the diagnosis.
2. Implement appropriate control measures (see below).
3. Report the outbreak to your local health department and the Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology (800-423-1271) **immediately; and stay in touch throughout the outbreak.**
4. Collect 8-10 nasopharyngeal swab specimens from recently ill persons. See: <http://www.wvdhhr.org/labservices/labs/virology/influenzaSurveillance.cfm>
5. Follow the course of the outbreak to assure that control measures are adequate. For large workplace or school outbreaks; follow absentee rates (not individual cases) AFTER existence of outbreak and diagnosis are established. In smaller congregate settings, a line list is valuable to track the progress of the outbreak and to adjust your control measures as needed.

## To help control the spread of infection:

1. Ill persons should be isolated until they can be sent home. Ill persons should stay home until 24 hours after fever has ceased without use of antipyretics.
2. Wash hands frequently and practice cough etiquette. See: <http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper/materials.htm> for educational posters.
3. Share CDC guidelines specific for the situation:
  - a. Schools and daycares: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/school>
  - b. Workplaces: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/workplace>
  - c. General: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>

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<http://www.dhhr.wv.gov/oeps/disease/flu/Pages/default.aspx>

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